UCLA Faculty Association

News and opinion from Dan Mitchell since 2009

Saturday, January 17, 2026

Straws in the Wind - Part 225

From Inside Higher Ed: *Faculty in South Dakota could lose their tenure status if they don't meet expectations, per a new policy the South Dakota Board of Regents approved in December. It requires tenured faculty at the state's six public higher learning institutions to undergo a performance review every five years, beginning during the 2026–27 academic year. While all faculty members already receive an annual performance evaluation by their immediate supervisor, the new policy adds another layer of review and considers five years' worth of those evaluations to rank a professor's performance.*

Approval of the policy makes South Dakota the latest state to enact a post-tenure review policy. Since 2020, numerous other states—including Florida, Georgia, Kentucky and Ohio—have done the same, whereas many others have weakened tenure through various other means. Indiana, for example, passed a law in 2024 that requires colleges to conduct post-tenure reviews every five years and deny tenure to faculty unlikely to foster "intellectual diversity."

...Under the policy, if a faculty member received an annual performance rating of "does not meet expectations" or was placed on a faculty improvement plan in the previous five years, "tenure will be non-renewed, and the faculty member will be issued a one-year term contract for the following academic year." The policy notes that the employee would still be eligible to apply for nontenurable positions within the system...

Full story at https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/tenure/2026/01/09/south-dakota-adopts-post-tenure-review.

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From Inside Higher Ed: *An assistant U.S. attorney apologized Tuesday on behalf of the Trump administration for wrongfully deporting a Babson College freshman... But it still remains unclear if or when the student will be brought back to the U.S. The student, Lopez Belloza, was first detained at Boston Logan International Airport on Thanksgiving as she attempted to fly home to Texas and surprise her family.*

A lawyer filed for her release in Massachusetts the next day, and a judge promptly ordered the administration not to transfer or deport her. But by that point, Belloza had already been moved between several facilities in Massachusetts and transferred to Texas. The day after that, she was deported to Honduras...

The Council of UC Faculty Associations

- Fight for the Future of Higher Education: Academic Freedom from the Classroom to the Clinic
- Our Concerns Over Revisions to APMs 15 and 16
- Fight for the Future of Higher Ed Town Hall
- Letter from AAUP to UC Objecting to Trellix
- Judge rules Trump demands of UCLA must be made public

Remaking the University

- Minneapolis Lessons for Higher Education - 1/31/2026
- Achieving Our University - 1/20/2026
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Higher Ed. News & Commentary

- Chronicle of Higher Education
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Other Faculty Organizations

- American Association of University Professors
- California Faculty Association (NEA)
- UC-AFT

Topics

[The judge in this case] has yet to rule on whether the government had to bring Belloza back to the U.S. This is a "tragic case of bureaucracy going wrong," he said. "It might not be anybody's fault, but she was the victim of it."

Full story at https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2026/01/15/ausa-apologizes-deporting-babson-college-student.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: Babson College, diversity, politics

Data Breach at Credit Union

Apparently, there was a data breach at the University Credit Union (that has a branch at UCLA) which exposed sensitive information.* Affected members of the credit union have been notified and offered free credit monitoring. Note that UC employees affected by the Accellion breach several years ago (2021) already have free credit monitoring.

===

*The credit union services many universities and other organizations.
See https://www.ucu.org/memberships/eligibility.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: email fraud, UC, UCLA

Subway Issues Today

Wilshire Bl/San Vicente Bl: Westbound Wilshire Directional Closure

Summary

On Saturday, January 17, from 5 am to 5 pm, westbound Wilshire Bl will be closed for street restoration.

When

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Lane Squeeze Coming Next Weekend

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Watch the Regents Meetings of Jan. 21, 2026

Just the (Corrected) Facts - Part 2

Is small beautiful in the current higher ed climate?

Climate Proposal

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Encampment Case Goes Forward - Decision

Watch the Regents Meetings of January 20, 2026

Straws in the Wind - Part 236 (Compact 2.0)

Former UCLA Law Dean Named Head of Columbia

- Saturday, January 17
- 5 am to 5 pm

Where

- Wilshire Bl and San Vicente Bl
- Eastbound Wilshire Bl will be reduced to two lanes from Le Doux Rd to San Vicente Bl
- Detour route: Westbound Wilshire Bl > Northbound San Vicente Bl > Westbound Burton Way > Southbound Robertson Bl

Traffic Control

- Westbound Wilshire Bl will be closed between San Vicente Bl and La Cienega Bl

Access

- Access for Emergency Vehicles & First Responders will be maintained.

Metro Access

Metro bus stops may be relocated or lines could be impacted. For information changes to Metro service, please call 323.GoMetro.

Noteworthy

- All work has received necessary permits and approvals.
- Local access maintained for westbound Wilshire Bl between San Vicente Bl and La Cienega Bl.
- Access for pedestrians will be maintained outside of the construction zone.
- Access for emergency responders will be maintained.
- Construction is a dynamic process and information is subject to change without notice.
- **24/7 Hotline:** 213-922-6934

Source: https://cloud.sfmc.metro.net/WilshireSanVicente_WestboundDirectionalClosure.

Basically, avoiding Wilshire - whether you are coming to UCLA from the east or the west - remains a good bet until the subway is completed.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:05 AM No comments:

Labels: traffic, transportation, UCLA

Friday, January 16, 2026

Extra Cash Continues

The state controller's cash report for the first half of fiscal year 2025-26 continues to show revenues running ahead of estimates made when the budget was enacted to the tune of over $10 billion. As we noted when we examined the governor's January budget proposal, this extra revenue is essentially what permitted him to submitted a no-hassles proposal for FY 2026-27.

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New Anderson Dean
No Retroactive Pension Payments for Delayed Filings

The state's unused borrowable cash reserves have fallen since last year at this time, but are still at a hefty $86 billion. So, the governor will not exit his office when his second term ends with the kind of crisis that Arnold Schwarzenegger had when he left and the state was having trouble just paying its bills.

The latest controller's report is at:

https://www.sco.ca.gov/Files-ARD/CASH/December2025StatementofGeneralFundCashReceiptsandDisbursements.pdf.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: controller, governor, politics, State Budget

Straws in the Wind - Part 224

From the Washington Post: *As Republican leaders moved to root out what they have criticized as liberal ideology at the University of Virginia, some conservative appointees to its board texted privately about ending "chemical and surgical mutilation" for transgender youth at its hospitals and undoing "regimes of racial classification" in its classrooms, according to nearly 1,000 pages of text messages reviewed by The Washington Post. The board members coordinated frequently with Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R) or his top aides in nearly every major debate at the flagship university in Charlottesville in the past year — which some observers have described as an unusual level of involvement by the state leader. The conservative appointees also spoke in candid, sometimes inflammatory terms about the university's then-president, James E. Ryan, his supporters and diversity policies.*

"This is war!" Stephen Long wrote on April 17 to a fellow board member about a professor who sought to preserve diversity, equity and inclusion programs. Board members have often been reluctant to speak publicly on university matters outside of meetings. But the texts, exchanged between June 2023 and mid-December by board members and top university officials, offer an unfiltered account of the body's inner workings as it rolled back some gender affirming care, dissolved the university's DEI office and responded to several investigations by the Trump administration, among other changes at U-Va. Ryan resigned in June amid the intensifying scrutiny. At times, the texts show tension between conservative, moderate and more liberal board members, including one who referred to his fellow board members as "crazies."

Youngkin spokesperson Rob Damschen said the involvement of the governor and his aides were "essential to responsible oversight." ...

Full story at https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2026/01/09/university-virginia-board-texts-messages-youngkin-dei/.

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From the Chronicle of Higher Education: *The University of Michigan's incoming president, Kent Syverud, could make up to $3 million a year, per his contract. At $2 million, his base pay would have set a new record last year, according to Chronicle data... In addition to the $2 million, Syverud, who has been president of Syracuse University since 2014, can earn an annual performance award that is worth up to 30 percent of his base pay, or $600,000. The university will also contribute up to $360,000 a year to his retirement plan after one year of service. At the end of his time as Michigan's president, unless he is fired for cause or leaves for another institution, Syverud will be able to take a one-year leave while earning his base pay. He can then join the faculty as a tenured professor and continue to earn his base pay for three years...*

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4th Quarter 2025 Wrap-Up on the Governor
Will Harvard Continue to Lead the Charge? - Part 107

► 2025 (1139)
► 2024 (832)

Colleges' presidential contracts are starting to feel more like those afforded to their football coaches, who get enormous pay packages but can be fired at a moment's notice. The people filling both positions are under pressure from board members, donors, alumni, and sometimes state lawmakers to meet certain metrics or step aside... But $3 million a year is still a lot for the leader of a public institution...

Other college presidents' compensation will likely match or exceed Syverud's in the near future, if they haven't already. Their contracts are a bit of an arms race, James H. Finkelstein, an emeritus professor of public policy at George Mason University, told The Chronicle in November. Presidents, he said, tend to want what they see their peers getting.

Full story at https://www.chronicle.com/article/new-u-of-michigan-presidents-pay-may-set-a-record.

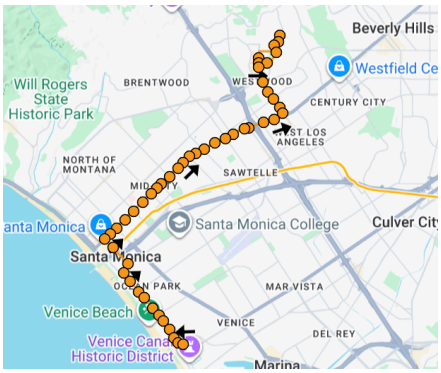
Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: diversity, George Mason U, politics, U of Michigan, U of Virginia

New Bus Lane to UCLA

From Santa Monica Next: *Streetsblog [has] spotted work underway on Santa Monica Boulevard in the Sawtelle neighborhood in West L.A...*

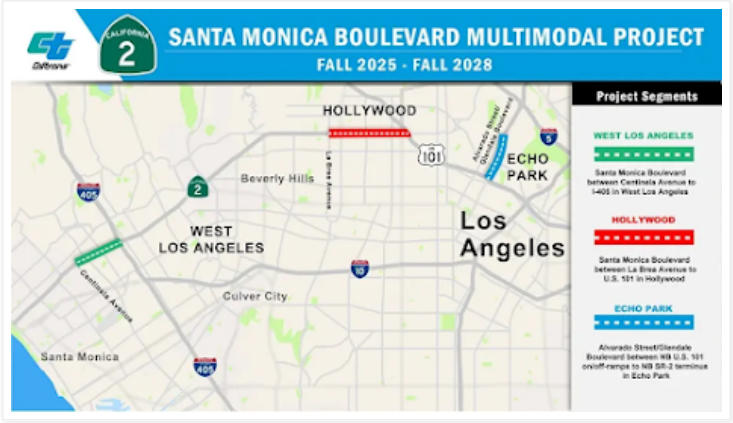
The scope includes plenty of sidewalk work (repairs and upgrades) and street resurfacing, plus some bus stop improvements, bike racks, and new bus lanes on Santa Monica Boulevard from Centinela Avenue to the 405 Freeway.



Big Blue Bus Route 1

Source: https://santamonicanext.org/2026/01/eyes-on-the-street-caltrans-santa-monica-blvd-construction-in-west-l-a/.

Note that this work, particularly the bus lanes, will likely affect the Santa Monica Big Blue Bus Route 1 buses to UCLA from Santa Monica and Venice. It may also affect driving to UCLA along Santa Monica Boulevard from the Westside. The work is part of a larger project. See the map below:



Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: traffic, transportation, UCLA

Thursday, January 15, 2026

Pension Payments at Risk

- 2023 (828)
- 2022 (719)
- 2021 (710)
- 2020 (914)
- 2019 (671)
- 2018 (595)
- 2017 (666)
- 2016 (715)
- 2015 (765)
- 2014 (704)
- 2013 (776)
- 2012 (839)
- 2011 (738)
- 2010 (431)
- 2009 (12)

Contributors

- California Policy Issues
- Toby Higbie
- UCLA Faculty Association

CUCEA, the systemwide group of campus emeriti associations, became aware of a particular theft of a pension payment earlier this month. It appears that the theft may have been accomplished by someone indicating that he/she had forgotten the password and being given authority to change the password, bank to which the pension was deposited, etc. That is, the theft seems to have occurred without any high-tech breach. (Exactly what occurred is not clear at this time, however.)

What appeared to be a single case of theft now seems to have occurred more widely. Excerpt from a message by the chair of CUCEA:

...There have been further reports of pension checks not arriving because of a security failure at UCRAYS. As a precaution, we strongly encourage retirees who receive pension checks to verify that their monthly payments have been distributed as expected. If your pension check does not arrive as anticipated, please contact UCRAYS and your campus retirement center as soon as possible and let CUCEA Chair Joel Dimsdale know as well (jdimsdale@ucsd.edu).

This situation is also a timely reminder to review and update your passwords. That updating process may be slower for UCRAYS in the near future as it tightens security.

The CUCEA board wrote UCOP January 13, 2026 advising them to:

1. Institute corrective training for RASC (retirement administration service center) personnel.

2. Disable telephone-based requests for password resets. We do understand that this will adversely affect RASC response times until security is enhanced, but it is necessary.

3. Perform a "lookback" on all password change requests since December 1 and communicate with those individuals.

4. Notify all retirees about the possible threats and advise them to take necessary actions.

We will be meeting with UCOP to review progress next week...

Exactly what is being done to reimburse the victims of these thefts is also unclear at this time.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 12:43 PM No comments:

Labels: CUCEA, pension, pensions, uc retirement, UCOP, UCRAYS

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